

MARVEL

35

LGY#735

AARON
GARRÓN
KEITH

EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES

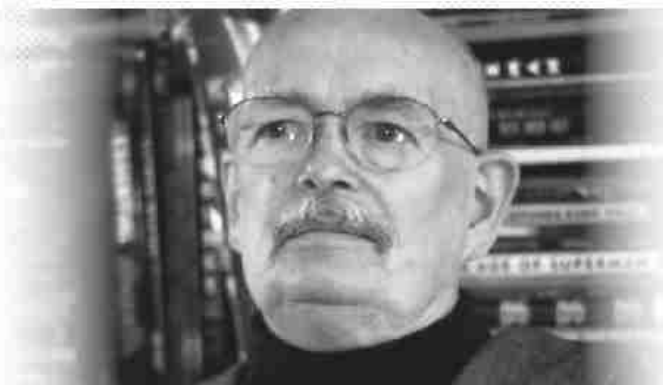
THE AVENGERS

THE AGE OF
KHONSHU
PART THREE



IN MEMORIAM

DENNY O'NEIL



COURTESY OF THE HERO INITIATIVE

1939–2020

Marvel Comics pauses to pay tribute to writer and editor Denny O'Neil, a true giant of the industry. Over his decades-long career, he set a tone of realism and relevancy in his storytelling that endures to this day.

Growing up in St. Louis, Missouri, O'Neil first cut his writing teeth as a newspaper journalist and columnist. Thanks to encouragement from fellow Missourian Roy Thomas, O'Neil earned a place at Marvel and would end up scripting titles such as *Strange Tales* and *X-Men*. In 1968, he began editing and writing for DC Comics, most notably *Green Lantern/Green Arrow*. In a seminal arc that left a profound impact in the comics industry, O'Neil and Neal Adams tackled the taboo subject of drug addiction among the youth with the discovery that Green Arrow's ward Speedy was abusing heroin.

After more than a decade, O'Neil returned to Marvel in 1980 as both writer and editor, jumping into *Amazing Spider-Man*, having memorable runs on *Iron Man* and *Daredevil* and forming new creative relationships with the likes of Frank Miller and John Romita Jr. During these trailblazing years, O'Neil mentored Frank Miller on *Daredevil* and Bill Sienkiewicz on *Moon Knight*.

In 1986, O'Neil rejoined DC Comics and stayed with the company for several more years, working with old friends and new collaborators. He continued to write comics for the rest of his life, revisiting familiar characters and concepts, but always looking for ways to shepherd them into new landscapes and allow them to grow while still respecting their history.

O'Neil impressed writers, artists and readers with his devotion to the craft of comics, his belief in the characters and his passionate drive to create stories that mattered. In addition to comics and graphic novels, he also wrote prose novels, nonfiction works, screenplays and reviews.

Denny O'Neil was a singular talent and a man of principles and strong convictions, all of which can be seen in every word he ever wrote. The industry will forever remember him, and he will be sorely missed.



DENNY O'NEIL MADE HIS MARK AT MARVEL WRITING CHARACTER-DEFINING COMICS, LIKE THOSE SEEN ABOVE, BUT MAY HAVE BEEN EVEN MORE IMPORTANT AS AN EDITOR, AS SHOWN BY A FEW OF THE WORKS HE SHEPHERDED, BELOW.



And there came a day, a day unlike any other, when Earth's Mightiest Heroes found themselves united against a common threat. On that day, the Avengers were born--to fight the foes no single super hero could withstand.

Marc Spector is the Moon Knight, mystically empowered by Khonshu, the Egyptian god of the moon. After Khonshu had a terrifying vision of a future ruled by Mephisto, Moon Knight set out to prevent it from occurring--at all costs. He attacked his former comrades, the Avengers, stealing their powers and weaponry and using them to reshape the world. The remaining Avengers became fugitives in the Moon God's twisted new world order, with Iron Man and Captain Marvel safeguarding the last needed piece of Moon Knight and Khonshu's plot--the infant inheritor of the Starbrand power!



"YOU DON'T BEAT THE DEVIL BY BEING AN ANGEL"

By Jason Aaron & Javier Garrón

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Martin Biro

ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Alanna Smith

EDITOR

Tom Brevoort

EDITOR IN CHIEF

C.B. Cebulski

**ONE MILLION
YEARS AGO.**

WITHOUT HIM, OUR
NIGHTS WOULD BE
DREADFULLY DARK.

OUR WEATHER,
WILD AND
EXTREME.

OUR WATERS,
ALL BUT STILL.

WITHOUT HIM
CALLING DOWN
TO US EVERY
NIGHT, LOOMING
SO TANTALIZINGLY
CLOSE, PERHAPS
WE NEVER
WOULD'VE FLOWN
BEYOND OUR OWN
ATMOSPHERE.

NEVER SET
FOOT ON
ANOTHER WORLD.

MOST HAVE NO IDEA.
AND I DO BUT STILL
HATE TO ADMIT IT.

THAT WITHOUT
THE GOD OF THE
MOON, WE'D
ALL BE LOST.





FOR HE HAS BEEN
WITH US ALL THIS TIME.
ALL OF OUR TIME.

TREATING
US ALL LIKE
HIS FISTS.

EVER SCHEMING FOR
THE ONE BLOODRED
NIGHT WHEN THE
RESPECT AND ADORATION
HE HAS LONG SO
DESPERATELY CRAVED...

...MIGHT FINALLY
BE WITHIN HIS
MOONLIT GRASP.

GODS HELP US.
THAT NIGHT
HAS COME.

NOW.
NEW THEBES CITY.
FORMERLY KNOWN
AS THE ISLAND OF
MANHATTAN.

I WAS
THERE...WHEN
THE CELESTIAL
FELL.

THE
DISEASED
ONE WHOSE
ROTTING CORPSE
INFECTED THE
NEWBORN
EARTH.

FROM MY
HOLY PERCH IN
THE NIGHT SKY, I
WATCHED THAT
INFECTION
SPREAD.

JUST LIKE
I WATCHED
THE STARBRAND
COMET ATTEMPT TO
BURN IT ALL AWAY,
ALONG WITH
EVERYTHING
THAT LIVED.

AND THE
ASGARDIANS
DESCEND TO BE
WELCOMED AND
WORSHIPPED BY THE
HALF-WITTED
DREGS WHO
SURVIVED.

I HAVE
ALWAYS BEEN
HERE, QUIETLY
GUIDING YOU LOT
THROUGH THE LONG
NIGHT OF YOUR OWN
EVOLUTIONARY
FUMBLING.

YET WHEN THE
GREAT POWERS
OF THE PREHISTORIC
WORLD FIRST
UNITED, THEY DID
SO...WITHOUT
KHONSHU.

AS IF THE
LORD OF THE
MOON WAS NOT
EVEN WORTH
THEIR NOTICE.

I WONDER...
IF THEY NOTICE
ME NOW.



WE'LL
SEE THAT
THEY DO.
EVERY
LAST ONE.

WON'T WE,
MJOLNIR?

MY
LORD...

THE GREAT
SALVATION OF THE
MOON'S LESS LUMINOUS
SATELLITE CONTINUES,
LORD KHONSHU.

THOUGH YOUR
HUMBLE PRIESTS REGRET
TO REPORT THAT THE EARTH'S
FORTIFICATION PROGRESSES...
SLOWER THAN
FORECAST.

THERE REMAIN
HEAVY POCKETS
OF RESISTANCE IN
WASHINGTON, D.C.,
MOSCOW, KRAKOA,
BENEATH THE
SEAS.

BUT EVERY HOUR
MORE MUMMIFIED ACOLYTES ARE
BEING CONJURED FROM THE REALMS
BEYOND AND MORE MOON-POWERED
PYRAMIDS ERRECTED AT STRATEGIC
POINTS ALONG THE GLOBAL
LEY LINES.

THE WORLD
WILL BE YOURS,
OH BENEVOLENT
ONE. THE WORLD
WILL BE
SAVED.

ALL THANKS
TO MIGHTY
KHONSHU.



IT'S NOT
ENOUGH.



THERE'S STILL A HOLE INSIDE HIM. A HOLE FULL OF FEAR.

HIS DREAMS ARE STILL RIFE WITH VISIONS OF BURNING EARTHS.

WITH MOONS OF SCREAMING METAL AND COMETS OF MELTED HUMAN FLESH.

WITH HELL ON A COSMIC SCALE.

KHONSHU KNOWS... HE WILL NEED MORE.

MY LORD, THE MOON TRAIN...



HE WILL NEED IT ALL.

THE MOON TRAIN RUNS TONIGHT. WITH A SPECIAL CARGO WE PREPARED. AS A LURE FOR THE LAST SHREDS OF RESISTANCE WITHIN THE CAPITAL.

WITH THE HELP OF YOUR FIST, WE HOPE TO--

THE FIST HAS HIS OWN MISSION. HE...



THE PANTHER RESISTS. THE PHOENIX HOVERS JUST BEYOND OUR REACH. THE STARBRAND, THE NEW STARBRAND IS THE KEY.

MY LORD?

LEAVE. NOW.



IF YOU VALUE YOUR IMMORTAL SOULS.

FIND THE STARBRAND OR THE EARTH WILL DIE.



AND HELL WILL
CONQUER ALL.

FOR THE
DEVIL HAS
COME.

KHONSHU!

YOU ARE
ACCUSED OF THE
UNPARDONABLE CRIME
OF MURDERING
MEPHISTO!

AND FOR
THIS YOU SHALL
PAY THE ULTIMATE
PRICE...



...AT THE
HANDS OF
MEPHISTO!

I HEAR HE CAME
WIELDING REVOLVERS THAT
FIRED BRIMSTONE BULLETS.
SOUL-PIERCING ROUNDS.

A GRIZZLED DEVIL
WITH BURNING GRAVEL
IN HIS GUTS, WHO'D NO
DOUBT GUNNED DOWN
BILLIONS IN WHATEVER
DEEP AND DISTANT HELL
HE'D SPAWNED FROM.

KHONSHU KNEW HE WAS
BUT THE FIRST OF *MANY*
VISITORS. MANY COSMIC
ASSASSINS TO COME.

THE AGE OF KHONSHU
HAD ONLY JUST BEGUN.
A MILLION YEARS IN THE
MAKING, AND THE MOON GOD
WOULD NOT SEE IT FALL.

NOT FOR A
MILLION MORE.

WE HAVE
EYES ON THE
MOON TRAIN.
BE READY.

AND WE KNOW
OUR TARGETS
ARE ON BOARD
HOW EXACTLY?

BECAUSE
"YAMP SENSES."
BECAUSE I CAN
SMELL THEM.

OH, GOTCHA.
SO YOU GOT THAT
WOLVERINE KINDA
NOSE, HUH,
BLADE?

LADY, AIN'T
A DAMN THING
ABOUT ME THAT'S
CANADIAN.

FOCUS,
AVENGERS. THIS
IS GUERRILLA
WARFARE. TIMING
IS EVERYTHING.

I'M ALSO
SMELLING A WHOLE
BUNCH OF MUMMIES
ON THAT TRAIN, CAP. WE
KNOW THIS IS PROBABLY
A TRAP, RIGHT?

LET'S HOPE
SO. TRAPS
ALWAYS HAVE
THE BEST
BAIT.

JEN,
YOU IN
POSITION?

ALMOST.
HOLD ON A
SEC.

THINK
ANGRY THOUGHTS.
POLITICS. STUDENT
LOANS. THE
KNICKS.







WE'RE THE
AVENGERS.

AND YOU
SHOULD THINK
ABOUT THESE NEXT
FEW SECONDS OF
YOUR LIFE VERY
CAREFULLY.

NO MATTER
WHAT COMES
THROUGH THAT
DOOR!



"AND NOW THE
CRAZY BASTARD
IS *USING* IT."

THIS IS SO
COMPLETELY
WRONG.

I KNOW.
FROM WHAT I HEAR,
MOON KNIGHT'S ALWAYS
BEEN A BIT ODD, BUT I
CAN'T UNDERSTAND WHY
HE'D TURN ON EVERYONE
LIKE THIS.

WHAT? NO.
MOON KNIGHT?

I NEVER TRUST
A GUY WHO WEARS
THAT MUCH WHITE.

BUT THAT'S NOT
WHAT I'M TALKING
ABOUT AT ALL.

WE SHOULD
NOT HAVE A
BABY!
LET ALONE
A BABY SUPER-
WEAPON!

I MEAN,
WHAT ARE WE,
THE X-MEN
NOW?

ISN'T THIS
EXACTLY THE SORT
OF THING WE WENT
TO WAR WITH THEM
OVER THAT ONE TIME
WITH THE PHOENIX?

HEY, YOU'RE
THE ONE WHO
SAID WE WERE
A FAMILY.



THAT WAS ME BEING ANNOYING BECAUSE I'M STRESSED THE *#@% OUT!

AND I'M SO DAMN GOOD AT BEING ANNOYING THAT YOU SAYING MY OWN WORDS BACK TO ME JUST NOW IS MAKING EVEN ME ANNOYED!

THE AVENGERS ARE NOT A FAMILY! NOT A TRIBE! NOT A COMMUNE!

THIS IS A JOB!



FOR ONCE WE SORT OF AGREE, TONY STARK.

OH GOD. YOU AGREEING WITH ME IS MAKING ME EVEN MORE FREAKED OUT.

THIS IS A JOB. THE HIGHEST LEVEL JOB ON THE PLANET. THIS IS THE JOB OF SAVING THE PLANET.

RIGHT? AND WHO BRINGS A BABY TO THAT SORT OF JOB? WHO BRINGS A STARBRAND BABY ANYWHERE?

APPARENTLY MORONS LIKE US, THAT'S WHO.



YOU'RE HALF RIGHT.

YOU ARE A MORON, TONY STARK.

BUT THIS ONE TIME, THE BABY IS THE JOB.

THE STARBRAND IS ONE OF THE POWERFUL WEAPONS IN THE COSMOS. ONE WE KNOW BARELY ANYTHING ABOUT.

BUT WE KNOW IT'S BONDED TO THIS LITTLE GIRL.

I MET THOSE MILLION-YEAR-OLD LEGACIES FACE-TO-FACE. AND BELIEVE ME, THEY DIDN'T BRING BABIES TO WORK.

AND THANKS TO YOUR TRIP TO THE PAST, WE KNOW THE BRAND'S LEGACY GOES BACK AT LEAST A MILLION YEARS. LIKE IT OR NOT, THAT LEGACY'S ENTWINED WITH OUR OWN.





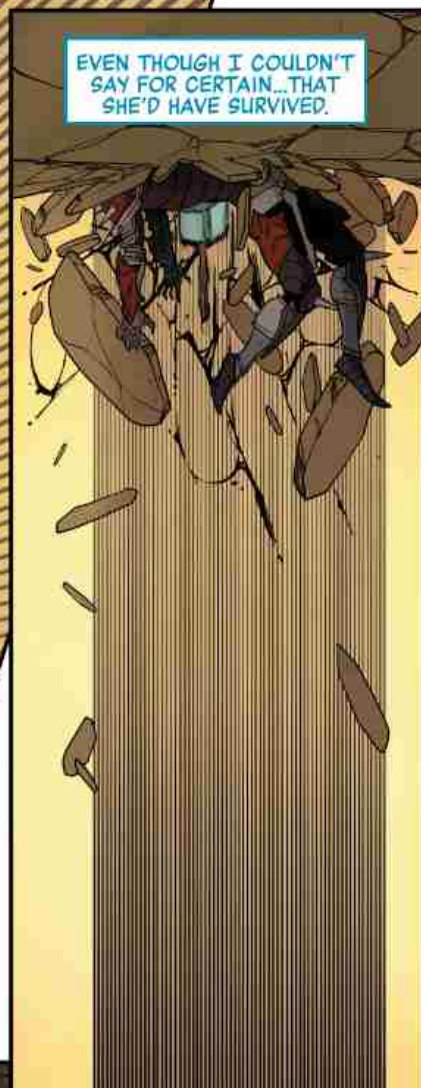






I WAS PREPARED TO RIP THE STARBRAND OUT OF THAT CHILD. EVEN THOUGH I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT WOULD'VE HAPPENED.

GAAARGGGH!!!



EVEN THOUGH I COULDN'T SAY FOR CERTAIN...THAT SHE'D HAVE SURVIVED.



I'VE MADE MY LIVING ON FEAR FOR YEARS NOW. WEARING WHITE SO THE BAD GUYS SEE ME COMING. SO THE FEAR CRIPPLES THEM. EVEN BEFORE MY FISTS DO.

IF YOUR PLAN IS THAT I'LL GET TIRED OF KILLING YOU...

...THEN I HATE TO SAY IT...BUT YOUR PLAN IS WORKING.

NOW I'M THE ONE BEING RULED BY IT. BY MY FEAR OF MEPHISTO.



TELL ME YOU WERE THE LAST! TELL ME HOW THIS IS EVEN POSSIBLE!

HOW IS IT I'VE MURDERED YOU A HUNDRED TIMES TODAY?! AND I'M SOMEHOW MORE AFRAID OF YOU THAN EVER?!

OF ALL THE
MEPHISTOS.

GAAAGGH!
I NEED MORE
POWER! THE STARBRAND.
THE PHOENIX. THE
PANTHER. IT'S THE
ONLY WAY. ONLY
WAY TO...

KHONSHU!

I'M GLAD THERE ARE
BETTER MEN THAN
ME IN THIS WORLD.

I'M GLAD THERE
ARE AVENGERS.

LET'S HOPE I'VE
HELPED SHOW
THEM THE WAY.

LOOK
ME IN MY
EYES, MOON GOD!
AND I PROMISE
YOU THIS!

ONE OF US
WILL BREAK
HERE TODAY!

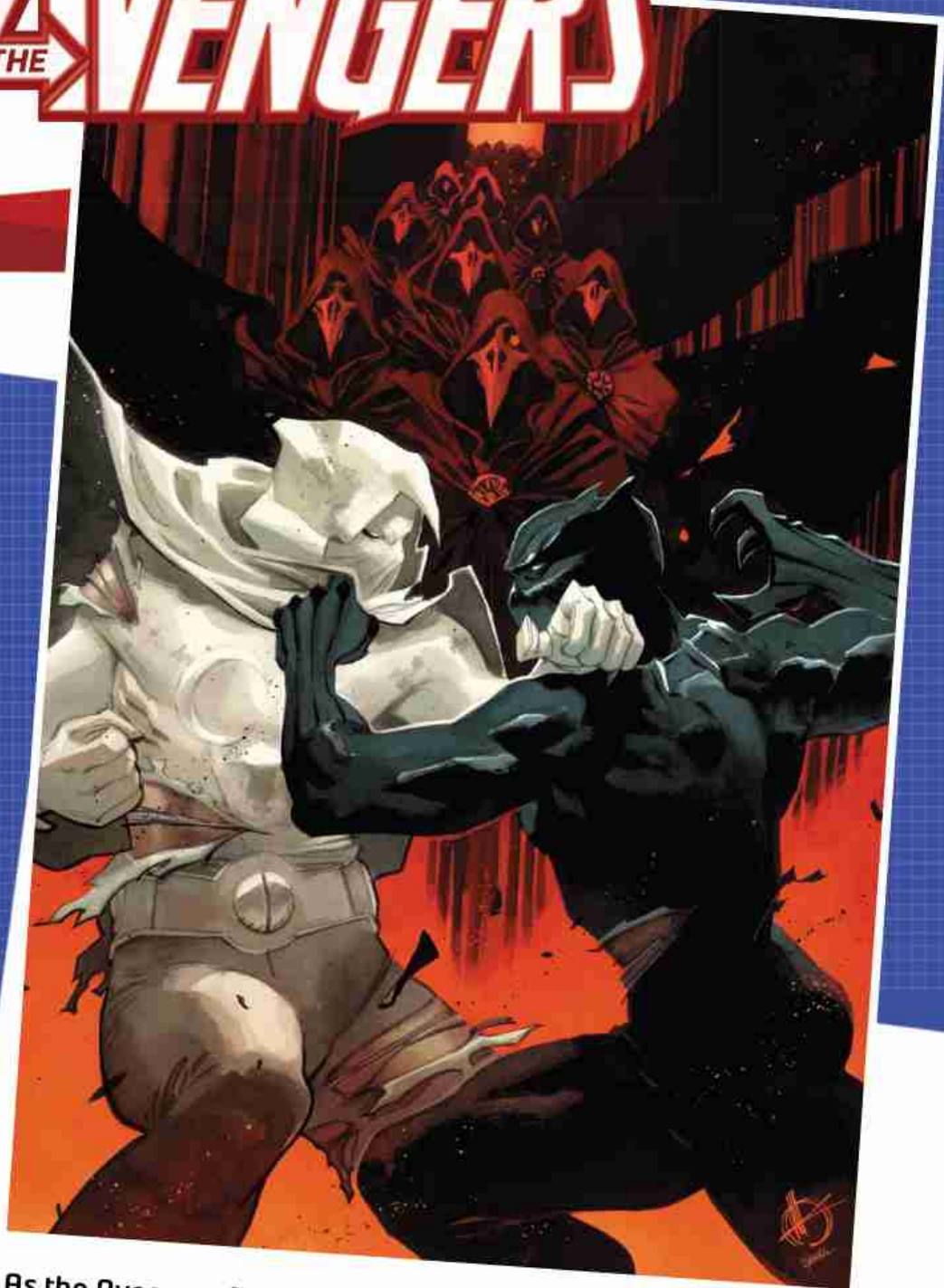
AND IT WILL
NOT BE THE
BLACK
PANTHER!

TO BE CONTINUED...

EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES

THE AVENGERS

#36



As the Avengers find themselves overwhelmed by Moon Knight and Khonshu's forces, a lone member of the team is left to face off against the God of the Moon! But if Khonshu falls, is an even worse fate waiting in the wings?

AVENGERS ASSEMBLE! EMAIL US AT MHEROES@MARVEL.COM AND MARK YOUR MESSAGES "OKAY TO PRINT" FOR A CHANCE TO SEE THEM ANSWERED IN FUTURE ISSUES!

